



Measurable Action for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA) Programme

Background

Over the past decades, peatland degradation, caused by unsustainable agricultural and forestry practices, such as excessive drainage and land clearance using fire, has resulted in an increase in the extent and frequency of forest and peatland fires. These fires emit significant greenhouse gases, cause large-scale deforestation and transboundary air pollution, also referred to as “haze”, ultimately leading to significant health and socio-economic impacts affecting more than 50 million people across the ASEAN region.

This phenomenon has been increasing in intensity over the last several decades - with El Niño drought years being the severest - and has been identified as a critical threat for the countries in Southeast Asia.

To address these issues ASEAN took a leadership role in advancing the haze-free agenda through the adoption of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) and its ratification by all ASEAN Member States in 2014. The ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (2006-2020) (APMS) and the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (2016-2020) (Haze-free Roadmap), the ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems 2014-2020 (APSMPE), and the ASEAN Task Force on Peatlands (ATFP) were developed and established to effectively implement the AATHP.





Children are forced to wear masks due to the toxic haze from peatland fires. Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan.
Photo by Aulia Erlangga/CIFOR

One of the challenges to implementing these regional strategies has been the lack of unified systems and approaches to track the progress and results of actions to enhance peatland management and prevent transboundary haze.

The Measurable Action for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA) Programme has been developed as a joint initiative between the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for strengthening the regional coordination for engaging all relevant actors, building capacity, harmonizing programmes and projects, and facilitating multiple sources for advancing sustainable land management, and haze prevention policies, programmes, and projects of finance for promoting haze-free farming and sustainable management of peatlands.

MAHFSA aims to support the ASEAN Member States to achieve the objectives of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS), the key targets of the ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems (APSMPE), and support implementation of the ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap.

The programme is designed and implemented by a consortium of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), International Fund for Agricultural Department (IFAD), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the Global Environment Centre (GEC), working in close cooperation with the ASEAN Member States (AMS).

Goal and Objectives

The goal of MAHFSA is to contribute to reduction of transboundary haze pollution and its impacts in Southeast Asia through enhanced regional coordination, investments, knowledge and results" management over a five-year programme (2019-2024) that was recently extended for 9 months until 2025.

The MAHFSA Programme has been developed to build capacity and enhance results-based management systems for sustainable peatland management and transboundary haze control, as well as enhance ASEAN's regional coordination mechanisms for advancing sustainable land management, and haze prevention policies, programmes, and projects.

The programme will advance the haze agenda based on systematic data collection, management and analysis of relevant biophysical, geospatial, climate change and socio-economic data for better monitoring changes on the ground and progress in reducing haze. Drawing on the data analysed, knowledge products will be developed to guide decision making on issues of land-use policy, regulation, enforcement, incentive frameworks, and resource allocation to haze hotspots at local, country and regional levels.

Robust haze-related data will serve as baseline for prioritisation, integrated implementation, and inclusive coordination mechanism to align various stakeholder (in-country, external and private sector) actions in tackling an agreed set of priorities. The regional coordination platform will be strengthened and broadened to promote the dissemination of best practice, improve fire and haze prevention and support evidence-based policy dialogue, drawing on data collected through a harmonised data management system that extends from local to regional.

The objectives are to:

- To build capacity and enhance data, information and results management systems for sustainable peatland management and haze control
- To enhance the availability and usage of knowledge products on sustainable peatland and haze management
- To enhance ASEAN regional coordination mechanisms for advancing sustainable land management, and haze prevention policies, programmes, and projects

WHY ARE PEATLANDS IMPORTANT?

Peatlands are disproportionately important to the world's climate. They cover around



3-5% of the earth's surface, but are home to more than 30% of carbon stored in soil worldwide

People live within and adjacent to peatlands and **depend on them** for their livelihoods and they are important sources of food, water, and biodiversity.



68% of tropical peatlands are found in **Southeast Asia**

Comprising of about **69 Giga tonnes** of carbon*

*Page SE, Hooijer A. 2016 In the line of fire: the peatlands of Southeast Asia. Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B 371: 20150176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2015.0176>



Thick smoke haze from peat fires. Outside Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan. Photo by Aulia Erlangga/CIFOR

Expected Outcomes and Outputs

The MAHFSA programme will directly benefit the ASEAN Member States from reduced haze pollution and sustainable peatland management, through strengthened capacity of monitoring and evaluation officers at local and national levels, and ministries and departments of the 10 AMS responsible for monitoring (data and information collection, management, and analysis), reporting and result management at local and national levels. MAHFSA will also build capacity and strengthen the work of the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACC).

MAHFSA will indirectly benefit at least 100,000 smallholders in fire prone areas, with improved land management and fire prevention approaches, policies, and coordinated implementation of on-going and pipeline projects mobilized via the ten-year investment framework to be established by the programme. By doing so, it will contribute to the achievement of the targets of the ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap which will benefit up to 50 million people in the region through better air quality and reduced GHG emissions. This will be achieved through improved policies and regulations, decision making and mobilisation of an estimated \$1.5 billion 10-year investment framework.

- 1** ▶ **Outcome 1:** Enhanced capacity of ASEAN for the establishment and use of information and result management systems for the implementation of the APMS, ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap and for reducing transboundary haze pollution levels.
 - ◀ **Output 1.1:** Capacity building package for data and information collection/ sharing and regional results management developed
 - ◀ **Output 1.2:** Capacity building undertaken at country and regional levels for improved data and information gathering and results management
- 2** ▶ **Outcome 2:** Accessible information and knowledge for all aspects of haze pollution reduction.
 - ◀ **Output 2.1:** Collation and development of knowledge products for informing different stakeholder groups
- 3** ▶ **Outcome 3:** Enhanced multi-stakeholder coordination and partnerships for targeted action related to haze reduction.
 - ◀ **Output 3.1:** Multi-stakeholder platform established for regional coordination and partnership

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